(b) if so, the likely benefits to Government by providing marketing rights to refineries;

(c) whether refineries in public sector would have any adverse effect on the decision of Government; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (d) Government, in November, 1997, decided to dismantle the Administered Pricing Mechanism in a phased manner. The said decision, inter-alia, includes the following:—

> "Investments in the refining sector will be encouraged by providing reasonable tariff protection and making marketing rights for transportation fuels viz MS, HSD and ATF conditional on owning and operating refineries with an investment of atleast Rs. 2000 crores or oil exploration and production companies producing atleast three million tonnes of crude oil annually."

Further, on 26.5.98, Government decided that the marketing of controlled petroleum products would continue to be regulated in accordance with the present regime until Administered Pricing Mechanism is fully dismantled.

No decision has been taken as yet for granting marketing rights to private and joint sector refineries.

Gas Connections under MP Quota in Villages

4987. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the residents of certain villages where there is not a Single Cooking Gas Agency find it impossible to get an LPG coupon from the Member of Parliament of their constituency as it requires a registeration receipts from the gas agency; and

(b) if so, what steps are taken to help such residents to avail LPG coupon from their respective MPs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) and (b) Under the extant guidelines, any person from a Member of Parliament's constituency desirous of getting a gas connection form MP's guota, can get himself registered with any nearest LPG distributor of Public Sector Oil Companies and avail LPG connection on basis of LPG coupon.